AMENDMENTS TO SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0105], with the following amended paragraph [0105]:

[0105] Raman spectroscopy is an important analytical technique for chemical monitoring, biological analysis and medical diagnostics due to the wealth of information on molecular structures that can extracted from experimental data. The Raman cross-section, however, is inherently weak, thus preventing the possibility to achieve low detection limit with normal Raman spectroscopy. This renewed interest for Raman spectroscopy has been due to the observations of enormous Raman enhancement of the SERS effect for molecules adsorbed on special metallic surfaces. SERS detection of single molecules using silver colloid media have been reported (- Nie S., and S.R. Emory, 1997, Science, 275, 1102; - Kneipp K., Wang Y., H. Kneipp, L.T. Perelman, I. Itzkan, R.R. Dasari, M. Feld, 1997, Phys. Rev. Lett., 78, 1667). Recent improvements have been achieved towards the goal of single molecule detection of cresyl fast violet (CFV) via Raman scattering using ~~nanostructed~~ nanostructured solid substrates including nanoparticles coated with silver (Stokes, Hueber et al, 1998; T. Vo-Dinh, Surface-Enhanced Raman Spectroscopy Using Metallic Nanostructures," Trends in Anal. Chem., 17,557 (1998)). These improvements are due to the optimization of a silver island substrate which imparts a large surface-enhanced Raman scattering (SERS) enhancement. Furthermore, a He-Ne laser enables obtaining an additional resonance enhancement factor, again raising the signal level. In the experiment performed, the detection system utilized a spectrograph equipped with a red-enhanced intensified CCD (RE-ICCD). A confocal excitation/collection geometry was implemented with a 100X objective lens. The 0.9 numerical aperture of this lens helped ensure a tight focus and efficient scattered signal collection. The SERS spectrum of CFV which was obtained from a 5×10^{-11} M solution. A 1-uL aliquot ethanolic CFV solution (i.e., 3×10^{7} molecules) was spotted on the solid SERS platform and allowed to dry after spreading to a 6.5 mm diameter. The broadness of the 595 cm^{-1} band of this spectrum results from the use of a 500-µm entrance slit width to improve signal collection. Assuming a laser spot diameter of 10 µm and even distribution of CFV molecules within the 6.5-mm diameter spot, the number of probed molecules was estimated to be approximately 70.